GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly identify and pursue Oil, Gas, Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in India and abroad. This is expected to meet the strategic needs of both companies. The scope of the MoU includes the following:

(i) Prepare a 'Blue Print' for E&P business in India and Overseas.

(ii) Identify and evaluate business opportunities in E&P related sectors in India and countries in West Asia, South Asia, Africa and other regions of interest.

(iii) Joint bidding for Blocks in NELP, CBM Bidding Rounds in India and abroad;

(iv) Jointly explore possibilities for farm-in option in already awarded exploration blocks in India and abroad;

(c) Although, no bid has been submitted till date by the GAIL & HPCL consortium for any exploration & production blocks, GAIL have recently bid for exploration blocks in Australia along with Prize Petroleum, a JV of HPCL, ICICI, OILEX NL and GSPC.

Murder of IOC official

2216. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a manager of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) posted at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh was murdered for doing this duty honestly in the later half of November, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there are instances of selling adulterated fuel and the officer concerned had ordered closure of some IOC dealer petrol pumps in Lakhimpur;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the measures taken by Government to check the mischief of adulteration and give adequate protection to officers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Shri S. Manjunath, Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC's) Sales Officer, who went for inspection of M/s. Mittal Automobiles, IOC's Retail Outlet (RO) in District Lakhimpur Kheri (UP) on 19.11.2005, has been murdered. He was reportedly shot dead by the dealer's son, Shri Monu Mittal alias Pawan Kumar Mittal along with other accused persons. It is further alleged that after killing the officer, they caried his body ina car to another RO of IOC, M/s. Balaji Filing Station in District Lakhimpur Kheri, which was run by Smt. Roma Agarwal, who is sister of the main accused, Shri Monu Mittal.

On driving out of M/s. Balaji Filling Station, the police intercepted two persons along with the dead body when they were trying to dispose of the body. All the accused, includign the main accused, Shri Pawan Kumar Mittal (Monu), have been arrested by the police.

IOC have reported that in the recent past M/s. Mittal Automobiles was inspected by late Shri S. Manjunath when the RO was found to be involved in irregularities like stock variation beyond permissible limits, non maintenance of inspection, stock, sales and other records and non-retention of Tank Truck (TT) samples. According to IOC, the dealer was imposed a fine of Rs. 75,000 under the relevant provision of Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG), 2005.

IOC have since suspended sales & supplies to both the above mentioned ROs with immediate effect and terminated both the ROs under the relevant provisions of the respective Dealership Agreements.

(c) and (d) IOC have reported that, based on their records, there has not been any established case of adulteration in Lakhimpur during the current year. However, there were three instances of suspension of sales and supplies and monetary penalty recommended by the officer concerned, for other irregularities observed, during the current year.

(e) The Government/Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have taken the following steps to contain the menace of adulteration:

(i) Under the Control Orders issued by the Government to prevent fuel adulteration, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, State Governments are empowered to take action against those indulging in adulteration. Government have taken up this matter with all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to step up inspections/surprise checks to ensure that adulteration-related activities are minimized and to exercise vigil/conduct inspections at various private firms, factories, processing units, etc., under their jurisdictions so as to identify the perpetrators of adulteration and take stringent action against them within the available legal framework.

(ii) OMCs undertake regular and surprise inspections of Retail Outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for penalty of termination of dealership in cases of adulteration being established.

(iii) As advised by the Government, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have created a separate wing to report to a Director other than Director (Marketing), which will oversee and monitor all activities and operations to curb adulteration and specify norms and guidlines in this regard.

(iv) Keeping in view the misuse/diversion of SKO for adulteration, the import of SKO by private parties has been canalized through OMCs.

(v) OMCs have introduced new tamper proof tank-truck locking systems to prevent en route adulteration by transporters.

(vi) Information Technology (IT) solutions like monitoring movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS) and monitoring the level of fuel tanks in Retail Outlets through retail automation are being introduced.

(vii) Branding of Retail Outlets and third party certification of Retail Outlets have been initiated by the OMCs.

(viii) Effective 2nd October 2005, Government have launched the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana as a pilot project in 417 blocks covering 23 States and one Union Territory for a period of six

months with a view to strengthening and streamlining the infrastructure for kerosene distribution and involving the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats and State Panchayati Raj Institutions in the supervision of PDS kerosene distribution, so as to ensure that entitled beneficiaries actually receive their entitlement and diversion to adulteration and black-marketing is capped, reversed and eventually eliminated. The pilot project is being concurrently evaluated by NCAER and, on the basis of the experience gained, Government will determine the possibility and desirability of extending th Pariyojana to cover all blocks in the country.

Measures to check adulteration are kept under continuous review of the Government.

The State Governments have been requested to provide adequate police protection/security to the OMCs officials as per the requirement, for carrying out inspections.

Demand for LPG

2217. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) used in the country during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the break-up of figures of gas provided through pipeline and cylinder during this period;

(c) the estimated demand of LPG in the next three years; and

(d) the measures taken to meet the demand?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) LPG consumption for the last three years in the country is as under:—